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ABSTRACT

Evaluated was the morale of 204 regular class teachers and 146 teachers of the educable (EMR) or trainable (TMR) mentally retarded at both elementary and secondary levels. Administered were a biographical questionnaire and the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire which examines opinion in the following ten areas: teacher rapport with principal, satisfaction with teaching, rapport among teachers, teacher salary, teacher load, curriculum issues, teacher status, community support of education, school facilities and services, and community pressures. Results showed no reliable differences between responses of regular elementary and special elementary teachers of the EMR. Secondary female teachers of the retarded were reliably more dissatisfied with their status, curriculum issues, and professional relationships than were other teachers. Male secondary EMR teachers reported greater rapport with fellow teachers than did regular teachers. Teachers of the TMR themselves as having lower status than regular elementary teachers. No relation was found between morale and whether the special teacher worked in a special or regular school. (DB)

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The Mental Retardation Training Program, a joint project of the College of Administrative Science, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, College of Education, and College of Medicine, is committed to the alleviation of the manpower shortage in the field of mental retardation. To this end, it provides an interdisciplinary arena for research and training through the mechanism of service to the retarded.

HISTORY

The impetus for the Training Program began with the Report of the President's Panel on Mental Retardation in 1962, and culminated in the enactment by the 88th. Congress of a series of three pieces of legislation to stimulate research, training and service facilities for mental retardation. In 1965, the report of the Citizen's Committee to the Governor of Ohio specifically stressed the need for manpower training in University-Affiliated Facilities for the Mentally Retarded.

GOALS

The broad objectives of the Training Program are:

- to develop an interdisciplinary approach to mental retardation research;
- to provide interdisciplinary instruction in mental retardation;
- to disseminate information related to mental retardation;
- to develop and promote methods of prevention of mental retardation;
- to expand scientific knowledge in the diagnosis and treatment of the retarded;
- to extend the breadth and depth of both student involvement in the community and in-service instruction for professionals.

ORGANIZATION

To serve its complex objectives, the Training Program has a Policy Council consisting of the Deans of the participating Colleges; a Program Advisory Committee consisting of faculty representatives of many generic disciplines; a Liaison Advisory Committee consisting of representatives of state and community agencies; an administrative triad (listed below); and three Program Coordinators through whom the academic departments relate in order to achieve the stated program objectives.

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
MENTAL RETARDATION TRAINING PROGRAM

Technical Report Series

68-3

MORALE OF TEACHERS OF MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN: AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION

by

Reginald L. Jones

November, 1968

Morale of Teachers of Mentally Retarded Children: An Exploratory Investigation

Reginald L. Jones

The Ohio State University

A variety of studies on special education teachers have been undertaken within the past decade. Many of these investigations were summarized in a recent review article by Jones (1966). The majority of the studies concerned, special educators' responses to self report measures of opinions, background, and teaching preferences. In some instances non-practitioners reported on their perceptions of the special education field. The investigations were designed to learn something of the unique characteristics of special education practitioners and of perceptions of special education teaching as an occupational specialty; they were about special education as an occupational area and the people who work in it.

The primary concern of the present study is with the areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in teaching among special education (teachers of the mentally retarded) as contrasted with non-special education practitioners. Among other considerations, it has been anticipated that the availability of this kind of knowledge can be valuable in pinpointing factors related to teacher turnover in this field, and of providing a description of the work situation as perceived by samples of teachers in-service.

That workers should be satisfied with their job has been well documented (Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman, 1959; Herzberg, 1966, Vroom, 1964). The isolation of sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction is important in its own right. There are, however, added benefits to be derived from such study, and these concern largely relationships between job satisfaction and job performance. Although there are many unresolved theoretical issues (Smith and Cranny, 1968), industrial and personnel psychologists have pointed to close relationships between morale (in its many dimensions) and actual performance on the job. The isolation of sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among teachers of exceptional children can be expected to lead to an understanding of factors potentially related to teaching performance.

Method

Subjects. The subjects were 350 special and regular teachers in-service in the states of California (N-301) and Michigan (N-49). The total sample comprised 146 teachers of the educable or trainable retarded[1] and 204 regular class teachers. There were 89 males and 261 females. All subjects volunteered to participate and were obtained from University classes in special and regular education, and through the cooperation of special education directors and supervisors[1]. Approximately fifty percent of those contacted responded with completed materials.

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[1] I would like to thank Drs. David Fils, Frank Hewett, Robert McIntyre, Melvyn Semmel, and Harry Wall for assistance in procuring subjects.

Procedures. Each participant received an envelope containing a description of the project, The Purdue Teacher Opinionaire, and a biographical data sheet. The 27 item data sheet inquired into a number of factors relating to the participant's background and experiences, and to characteristics of his current work situation. Of special interest were questions inquiring into the number of teachers in the same specialty as the respondent, and whether or not the respondent taught in a special school. As will be indicated in a later section, special analyses were undertaken on these questions. The primary method of analysis involved statistical comparisons between the Purdue Opinionaire responses of special education teachers and the responses of regular teachers of the same sex and level (i.e., elementary or secondary) using "t" tests.

Purdue Teacher Opinionaire. The Purdue Teacher Opinionaire is a recently developed factor analytically grounded measure of teacher morale comprising ten subtests (Rempel and Bentley, 1964); a total morale score is also given. Each subtest has some 5 to 20 items to which the subject responds using a Likert type format. Individual component reliabilities range from .79 to .98. The subtests are thus highly stable. Opinionaire subtests and illustrative items are given below:

I. Teacher Rapport with Principal

2. The work of individual faculty members is appreciated and commended by our principal.

3. Teachers feel free to criticize administrative policy at faculty meetings called by our principal.

II. Satisfaction with Teaching

19. Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction.

24. Teaching enables me to make my greatest contribution to society.

III. Rapport Among Teachers

18. There is a great deal of griping, arguing, taking sides, and feuding among our teachers.

22. Generally, teachers in our school do not take advantage of one another.

IV. Teacher Salary

4. The faculty feels that their suggestions relative to salaries are adequately transmitted by the administration to the board of education.

9. I am satisfied with the policies under which pay raises are granted.

V. Teacher Load

1. Details, "red tape," and required reports absorb too much of my time.

2. Teachers in this school are expected to do an unreasonable amount of record keeping and clerical work.

VI. Curriculum Issues

17. Our school has a well balanced curriculum.

20. The curriculum of our school makes reasonable provision for student individual differences.

VII. Teacher Status

13. My teaching position gives me the social status in the community that I desire.

15. Teaching enables me to enjoy many of the material and cultural things I like.

VIII. Community Support of Education

66. Most of the people in this community understand and appreciate good education.

67. In my judgment, this community is a good place to raise a family.

IX. School Facilities and Services

16. My school provides me with adequate classroom supplies and equipment.

21. The procedures for obtaining materials and services are well defined and efficient.

X. Community Pressures

81. This community expects its teachers to meet unreasonable personal standards.

85. As a teacher in this community, my nonprofessional activities outside of school are unduly restricted.

Results and Discussion

Elementary teachers of educable mental retardates vs. regular elementary teachers. Ninety-three regular female elementary teachers and 39 elementary teachers of the educable

mentally retarded (EMR) in the State of California completed the Purdue Opinionaire. The regular teachers had a mean age of 35.66, and an average of 9.53 years of teaching experience. The EMR teachers had an average age of 37.21 and 7.41 years of teaching experience, 2.97 of which were with EMR's. The two samples were thus closely matched for age, although the regular teachers averaged about two years of experience more than EMR teachers. However, in spite of the differences in years of teaching experience, no reliable mean differences in responses to any of the eleven scales on the Purdue Opinionaire were found for the two samples ($p < .05$ adopted as a critical value).

Analyses of small samples of male regular elementary teachers (N=20) and male teachers of EMR's (N=11), also closely matched for age and experience, again revealed no differences in mean opinionaire responses between the two groups. However, the small number of subjects comprising the samples dictate caution in rejecting the null hypothesis in this instance. This same admonition holds, of course, for several of the analyses reported below, most of which involve small and self selected samples of teachers.

The data on responses of both regular and special elementary teachers revealed, perhaps as might be expected, wide variation in responses. There are clearly satisfied and dissatisfied teachers in both samples. Most noteworthy, however, is the fact that within the sampling limitations of the study, the kinds of concerns expressed by the regular elementary teachers were not reliably dif-

ferent from those expressed by either male or female teachers of educable mentally retarded children.

Secondary teachers of educable mentally retarded vs. regular secondary teachers. Forty-seven regular female secondary teachers, and fourteen female secondary teachers of EMR's completed the Purdue Opinionaire. The regular teachers had an average age of 34.04 and 6.83 years of teaching experience. Teachers of EMR's had an average age of 33.50 and 4.43 years teaching experience, 2.64 years with EMR's. The results of teacher opinionaire responses for these two groups are reported in Table 1. Data in this table reveal that the regular teachers saw themselves as having greater rapport with their colleagues than did the special teachers (difference significant at the $<.01$ level). The special teachers also tended to be less satisfied over salary issues, but the differences between the samples could have been due to the greater experience of the regular teachers. The greatest differences ($p < .001$) between the samples were found in the areas of curriculum issues and teacher status. On both subtests, the special teachers expressed more dissatisfaction. There was a trend for the special teachers, compared to regular ones, to perceive greater community pressure but less community support ($p < .10$). Finally, the overall morale of the regular teachers was reliably higher than that of the special teachers ($p < .02$).

The picture for male teachers of regular and special classes differed from that of the females, although on the whole the

Table 1

Purdue Opinionaire Responses of Regular Secondary, and Secondary Teachers of Educable Mental Retardates: Female

Purdue Opinionaire Subtest	Secondary Teachers Regular Female M.	S.D.	Secondary Teachers EMR Female M.	S.D.	t	p
1. Teacher Rapport with Principal	57.45	15.48	55.50	12.67	.47	NS
2. Satisfaction with Teaching	68.57	7.57	65.29	10.72	1.03	NS
3. Rapport Among Teachers	43.92	8.12	38.07	6.45	2.72	<.01
4. Teacher Salary	21.13	4.51	18.43	2.98	2.57	<.02
5. Teacher Load	34.55	5.06	34.29	3.87	.01	NS
6. Curriculum Issues	16.26	2.96	13.64	2.13	3.52	<.001
7. Teacher Status	25.71	3.94	20.00	4.93	3.52	<.001
8. Community Support of Education	14.15	3.62	12.14	3.30	1.91	<.10
9. School Facilities and Services	14.15	3.70	13.36	2.98	.80	NS
10. Community Pressures	17.13	2.04	15.71	2.49	1.89	<.10
11. Total Morale	312.51	38.60	286.43	30.70	2.55	<.02

differences were not as reliable as were the female ones (see Table 2). Male teachers of EMR's, compared to male regular teachers, tended to perceive greater rapport with their colleagues ($p < .02$). Also, there was a trend toward greater satisfaction with teaching, and higher overall morale on the part of the EMR teachers ($p < .10$). As noted previously, the small sample size should be kept in mind when interpreting the above findings.

Teachers of trainable mental retardates vs. regular elementary teachers. Opinionaire responses of nineteen California female teachers of trainable mental retardates (average age 42.84, average years of teaching 5.15) were contrasted with the responses of 93 regular elementary teachers (average age 35.66, average teaching experience 9.53 years). Only one reliable difference emerged from the analyses: a tendency ($p < .01$) for the teachers of trainables to perceive themselves as having lower status. Their responses also pointed to more dissatisfaction with salary (again this could be due to their shorter experience), load, and curriculum issues ($p < .10$).

Correlates of morale. It was speculated that certain dimensions of morale (1) rapport with principal, (2) satisfaction with teaching, (3) rapport among teachers, (4) teacher status and (5) total morale, would be highest in situations where there was more than one teacher in the specialty. It was also speculated that morale would be higher in special than in regular schools. These hypotheses derived

Table 2

Purdue Opinionaire Responses of Regular Secondary, and Secondary Teachers of Educable Mental Retardates: Male

Purdue Opinionaire Subtest	Secondary Teachers Female Regular M.	S.D.	Secondary Teachers Male EMR M.	S.D.	t	p
1. Teacher Rapport with Principal	58.54	14.41	64.17	12.26	1.52	NS
2. Satisfaction with Teaching	63.91	10.53	68.89	8.17	1.95	<.10
3. Rapport Among Teachers	42.68	6.51	47.33	6.32	2.55	<.02
4. Teacher Salary	18.57	4.89	18 39	4.23	.14	NS
5. Teacher Load	34.68	5.63	37.00	5.02	1.56	NS
6. Curriculum Issues	14.39	3.29	15.67	3.27	1.31	NS
7. Teacher Status	21.00	5.18	21.83	4.15	.65	NS
8. Community Support of Education	14.98	3.08	13.11	4.13	1.65	NS
9. School Facilities and Services	14.77	3.77	14.67	3.55	.10	NS
10. Community Pressures	16.27	2.55	16.56	3.26	.33	NS
11. Total	299.80	42.57	317.61	32.35	1.75	<.10

from assumptions about the standing of the special teacher in the predominantly regular school. Informal data have suggested that the special teacher sees herself as possessing low status within the school, and that she perceives that most of her non-special education colleagues have little understanding of or appreciation for her work. The presence of one other special teacher, or in the case of the special school, several other teachers, and a principal who understands her problems, it is speculated, should lead to increased morale in the special teacher. The rationale underlying this view is that communication with those who understand and can share in and appreciate one's work is very directly related to the way one feels about the work.

Test of the first notion, that morale would be highest in the situation where the special teacher was joined by at least one colleague in her specialty, was undertaken with 38 female EMR teachers in California (14 isolated, and 24 not isolated) and 49 female teachers of TMR's in the state of Michigan (12 isolated, 37 not isolated). No reliable differences were found among opinionaire subscores for the California sample. However, teacher rapport with the principal and total morale were reliably higher in the isolated Michigan group (i.e., where there was only one teacher). The fact of higher total morale in the Michigan isolated sample was contrary to expectation. No ready and easy explanation for this finding can be offered. Given the large number of analyses undertaken, it could be merely a chance occurrence. On the other hand, it is possible that the question

of whether or not a teacher of trainable retardates works in a situation isolated from her peers is entirely too simple an explanation for teacher morale. The quality of supervision, the dynamics of the particular situation, including non-special teachers' understanding of the special teachers' work, are two additional considerations which come to mind. If we are to fully understand the reasons for teacher satisfaction in work with exceptional children it will be important to study the interactions suggested above and other related ones.

The second view, that morale would be higher in the special school, received no support, as there were no statistically significant differences between the responses of those teaching in the special school and those integrated in regular schools.

With the exception of questions concerning relationships between morale and the number of teachers in the specialty, or whether or not the respondents taught in a regular or in a special school, no additional correlates of morale were studied. The present study sought to explore differences in morale between regular and special education teachers at a rather molar level. As was indicated in findings reported in preceding sections, some differences between groups were found. The most marked differences were between regular and special secondary EMR teachers. Somewhat surprising was the absence of differences between regular and special teachers of EMR's. Of course, in virtually all analyses the absence of differences may have been due to the small numbers of subjects employed. However, it appears

equally likely that a variety of other variables have interacted with certain dimensions of morale and have served to cancel out differences between groups. It will remain for additional studies to undertake explorations of classes of variables not dealt with in this paper that may be potentially related to the morale of the special and of the regular teacher and, of course, to extend the respondents to wider and more representative samples of teachers of exceptional children. The more adequate design would be to draw regular and special teachers from the same school building, again matching subjects for age, experience and educational background. This procedure would more nearly equate groups of regular and special teachers on presumed relevant background variables, thus leaving free to vary only the fact of special or regular teaching status.

Summary

An exploratory study of the morale of certain special education teachers was undertaken using the ten subtest factor analytically grounded Purdue Teacher Opinionaire. The subjects were 350 regular and special education practicing teachers in the states of Michigan and California.

The results revealed no reliable differences between the responses of regular elementary and elementary teachers of the educable mentally retarded. Secondary female teachers of the retarded, however, were reliably more dissatisfied with their status, with curriculum issues, and with their relationships with other

teachers. Male secondary EMR teachers tended to perceive greater rapport with their fellow teachers than was the case with regular teachers.

Compared to regular elementary teachers, teachers of the trainable mentally retarded saw themselves as having relatively lower status.

In the case of a small sample of teachers of educable and trainable mental retardates, morale was found to be unrelated to the respondents' location in a special or in a regular school; or to whether or not the respondent taught as the only special teacher in the school building or was joined by others (except in one sample where isolated teachers were found to have greater rapport with the principal). However, the above findings, as were others reported in this paper, are viewed as tentative, because of the small sample size and other sampling problems.

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